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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000647

SIPDIS

NSC STAFF FOR SINGH; ROME FOR LAROCCO

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [IR](#) [AORC](#) [EG](#) [KNNP](#) [IAEA](#) [EUC](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN/IAEA: GOE PRESSES FOR REFERENCE TO ZONE FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS; VOTING POSITION UNDETERMINED.

REF: A. CAIRO 604

[B](#). STATE 17001

[C](#). STATE 17062

Classified by ECPO Minister Counselor Michael Corbin, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Following the Ambassador's discussion with Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit on referring Iran to the UNSC on February 1 (Ref A.), ECPO MinCouns followed up with Americas' Affairs Assistant Minister el-Hefny February 2 (as the Ambassador had traveled to visit the Gaza border/MFO)(Ref B.). El-Hefny explained that the Egyptian Mission in Vienna had proposed language to the U.S. Delegation on including reference to a "nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East." El-Hefny said that the Egyptian proposal was a serious effort by Egypt to gain more support for the resolution in the Arab World and to respond to domestic pressure on the issue of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. He emphasized that Egypt was not calling for "a conference or other complicated proposals," but was using language that had been included in previous resolutions. In that regard, he said, rather than calling for a zone free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Egypt wanted reference simply to Nuclear weapons, both in keeping with the mandate of the IAEA and as a less ambitious goal.

[1](#)2. (C) When ECPO MinCouns pressed for Egypt's support for the resolution as it stood, El-Hefny declined to specify how Egypt would vote, stating that the language on the zone was not a negative move but that including the language was an "opportunity" for the USG to gain worldwide support for the shared objective of preventing Iran from adopting nuclear weapons. In response to the fact that the language could have the effect of downplaying or justifying Iran's violations of its international obligations, El-Hefny reiterated Egypt's view that, to the contrary, the language strengthened the resolution. El-Hefny said Egypt believed Russia and China would vote for the resolution, sending a strong message to Iran. The Egyptian language would give the resolution additional support in the Arab World, among members of the OIC and beyond. Concluding his points, El-Hefny said Egypt believed the U.S. should seize the opportunity to work with Egypt on this point--"it would be a very positive sign for the bilateral relationship."

[1](#)3. (C) In a follow-up call with the Foreign Minister's cabinet officer for disarmament affairs, Omar Youssef, MinCouns again pressed for Egypt's support on the resolution. Youssef said Egypt had three different proposals for language for the resolution to address its belief that mention should be made about the regional situation. He said the Foreign Minister had considered all the options on how to be forward-leaning on this issue and that he hoped the U.S. would seriously consider the Egyptian proposal. Youssef also declined to state how Egypt would vote on the resolution.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The decision on how Egypt will vote will be made in consultation with the President, who despite the extremely successful visit to Cairo February 1 by Israel FM Livny, and the overwhelming support for the resolution, will likely take the Foreign Minister's advice that to defend itself domestically and in the Arab world, Egypt should abstain.

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